

Dale Farm protester says address 'stolen' after letter from police

Traveller's speeding fine lands on councillor's mat

By JON AUSTIN
jon.austin@nqe.com

A COUNCILLOR at the forefront of the battle against illegal settlers at Dale Farm believes he has had his address "stolen" by a traveller.

David McPherson-Davis, a Ramsden Crays parish councillor, had an Italian speeding fine in the name of James Flynn posted to his home.

It was the second time Mr McPherson-Davis received mail at his Crays Hill address, called Oakdene, linked to the site.

Around 18 months ago, details of a benefit claim for a Mrs Sheridan mysteriously arrived.

The latest letter, on behalf of Italian Police, said Mr Flynn had driven at 107kph in a 90kph zone in a hire car at Bergamo, near Milan.

It warned action was looming if a £161 fine was not paid.

Mr McPherson-Davis, who has campaigned to clear the site since 2001, telephoned to say it was not connected to his address.

He was told Mr Flynn had entered the country using an address in Oak Lane, but hired the car using his details.

He said: "I wonder if this is the tip of the iceberg. First there was the benefits letter then this. They have stolen my address."

Mr Flynn's other address is 27 Oak Lane - the caravan pitch where two people died in a mobile home fire in 2005 - and believed to be empty.

Echo research found it has been used by travellers in court and to set up a suspect furniture import company.

Mr McPherson-Davis twice contacted Essex Police with concerns, including during a public neighbourhood action panel at Ramsden Bellhouse.

He said: "I am not happy with the response and got no incident number."

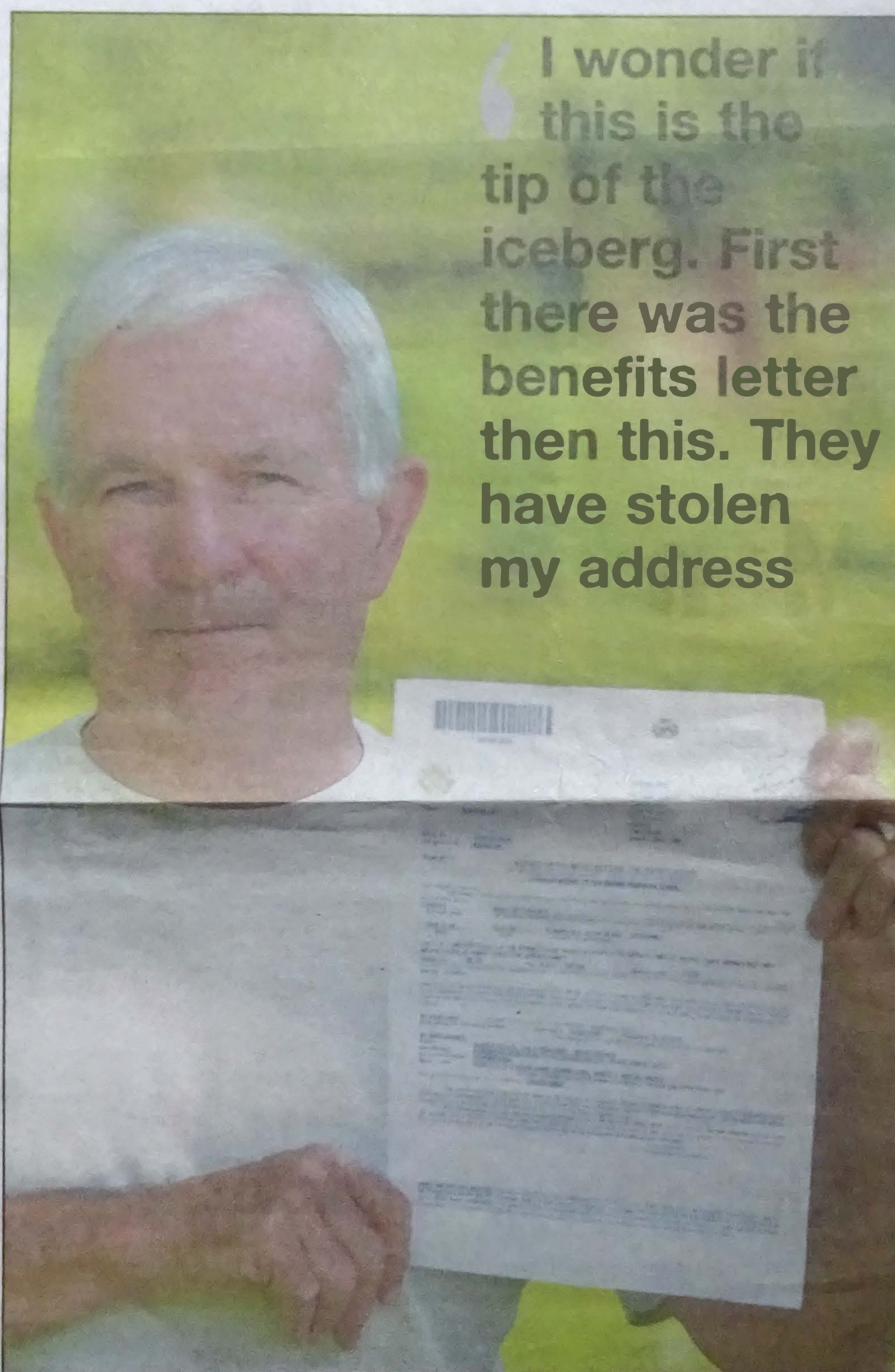
"They said there was nothing they could do because it was in Italy."

"What else might my address be being used for. It could be fraud."

PC Nigel Scott, neighbourhood officer for Crouch and Burstead, told Mr McPherson-Davis he was not convinced it was a crime, and declined to investigate.

He said: "We don't know how he came to use the address. I believe there may be a property called Oakdene on the site. They could have confused this with yours in Italy."

Essex Police spokesman Roger Grimwade said: "Using a third party's address without consent is not necessarily a crime, and may be a contractual issue with the hire firm."



■ Upset - parish councillor David McPherson-Davis

Picture: PAUL WATSON SMBQ3

We seek him here, we seek him there...

A STRAIGHT-TALKING cop gave a startling insight into the reality of policing at Dale Farm, likening catching traveller crooks to tailing the Scarlet Pimpernel.

Essex Police has always maintained it deals with travellers and the settled community the same, policing each without fear or favour.

Yet PC Nigel Scott, neighbourhood officer for Crouch and Burstead, spoke frankly to the Echo after the latest neighbourhood policing panel at Ramsden Bellhouse.

He stressed there were many law-abiding people at Dale Farm who taxed and insured their vehicles.

However, he admitted those who do break the law often "run rings" around police with multiple addresses and dates of birth, making identification impossible.

He said: "They have cars registered to Wolverhampton, Cambridge and other places."

Referring to James Flynn on the speeding ticket received by David McPherson-Davis, he said: "If we did investigate, I would not be able to find him. There will be several James Flynn's on the site. How would I get the right one?"

When the Echo suggested asking Italian counterparts for a date of birth, he replied Mr Flynn would have a number of different ones, and there may be no record of the right one, and addresses at the site sometimes changed.

He added: "Even with a date of birth, without a picture, how could I prove he was the right one?"

We suggested this James Flynn must exist and was not the Scarlet Pimpernel, but he said: "He is the Scarlet Pimpernel."

MP wins crucial talks on alternative homes

MP John Baron has secured talks with the Government about finding alternative homes for travellers on illegal sites at Dale Farm and Hovefields.

He challenged Sadiq Khan, Communities Minister, in Parliament over the Government's responsibility for helping Basildon Council find temporary sites outside the district where travellers could move to avoid an eviction.

He asked: "The 85 traveller families

at the illegal Dale Farm site have now exhausted their planning and legal options. Basildon Council is rightly looking to return the unauthorised site to green belt condition, but hopes to avoid, as we all do, a forced eviction."

"For this to happen the ball is in the travellers' court, for they need to move off peacefully, but there is a shortage of sites."

"Given the scale of the issue, and the fact the Government is partly

responsible for the problem, because it gave travellers two years to remain, will the minister now help identify transit sites outside the district, and will he meet to discuss this?"

The minister questioned the Government's responsibility, but agreed to a meeting on a date to be set.

Mr Baron said afterwards: "If the Government refuses and the travellers remain, then sadly there can be no alternative to a forced eviction."

STEEL FOR BUILDERS EXPRESS SERVICE

STRUCTURAL STEEL CUT & DELIVERED
SPlicing • DRILLING • WELDING • ERECTION
CUT & BENT BAR • REINFORCING MESH

DAILY DELIVERIES

BRANDON STEEL ☎ 01708 864028
FAX: 01708 866638 E-mail sales@brandonsteel.co.uk